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PROGRAM NEWS

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B²X Diets of Men, Women, and Children in the United States

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A survey of the food intake and nutritive value of diets of men, women, and children in the United States was made in spring 1965.

A few of the highlights from the study were:

- Average diets for most of the sex-age groups, into which individuals were classified, either approached or were above the Recommended Dietary Allowances set by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council in 1968 for calories and five of the seven nutrients studied—protein, vitamin A value, thiamine, riboflavin, and ascorbic acid. Calcium and iron were the nutrients most often found below allowances.
- In general, the diets of males met the allowances for more nutrients than did the diets of females. As might be expected, quantities of most of the foods and beverages eaten by men and boys were larger than those eaten by women and girls of the same age.
- Adolescent girls and women between the ages of 9 and 55 and older men and women were found to have average diets needing improvement in several nutrients.
- Except for iron, the average diets of children under 9 years of age were above the recommendations.

In the survey, no information was obtained on the nutritional status of individuals. Hence, no conclusions can be drawn concerning the existence of hunger or malnutrition. Results do imply, however, the need for expanded efforts in nutrition education.

HOW AND WHY THE STUDY WAS MADE

As part of the nationwide household food consumption survey made by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in spring 1965, information was obtained on the food intake for one day of individual members of the households inter-

viewed. This is the first time estimates of the food eaten by individuals have been obtained on a nationwide basis. Approximately 14,500 reports of food intake of men, women, and children were collected. The interviews were distributed over the 13 weeks of spring 1965 (April, May, and June). Data were collected during all days of the week, including Saturday and Sunday.

After the household food information was obtained, respondents were requested to provide information about the food eaten by family members both at home and away from home. Homemakers were asked the following questions for each member of the household:

1. What foods and beverages were eaten (including information on preparation)?
2. How much of each?
3. What time of day was food eaten?
4. Was food eaten at home or away from home?

Information on food intake was obtained by the recall method for the day (midnight to midnight) preceding the interview. A 24-hour period was chosen in order to include all between-meal food or snacks as well as regular meals eaten.

The data are summarized in terms of:

- Average quantities of foods,
- Percentage of persons using those foods,
- Average quantities of nutrients in all foods eaten,
- The percentage of the total nutrients contributed by each major group of foods.

Calculations of averages and percentages for each of the 22 groups of persons, classified by age and sex, were based on all persons in each group.

The averages and percentages based on reports from the large number of persons included in this survey provide data on both food consumption and nutrient content of diets that are representative of the various groups of individuals.

Data from the study are expected to be most useful in providing information on types of foods used by various sex-age groups; for comparing the quantities of foods consumed and nutritive value of the diets of these groups; in highlighting groups with diets that need improvement; and in providing information on the food consumed by various sex-age groups making up the family.

FOOD INTAKE

Quantities of the food groups eaten by men and boys in the United States were generally larger than those eaten by women and girls in the same age range. The number of persons eating the foods, however, is not reflected by the quantities. Similar numbers of males and females used most of the food groups, but women and girls ate smaller amounts.

Exceptions to these generalizations were found in the following groups: tomatoes and citrus fruit, dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables, and other vegetables and fruit. In these groups, average quantities eaten by women and girls equaled or exceeded quantities eaten by men and boys at the same ages.

Kinds and amounts of food eaten were tabulated by 12 food groups: milk and milk products; eggs; meat, poultry, and fish; legumes and nuts; fats and oils; grain products; tomatoes and citrus fruit; potatoes; dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables; other vegetables and fruit; sugars and sweets; and beverages other than milk and juices. The charts show the quantities eaten in five of these groups (figs. 1 through 5).

Milk and milk products

Foods in this group were the major source of calcium in the diet, and in most sex-age groups, the major source of riboflavin. Quantities shown in the chart are in terms of

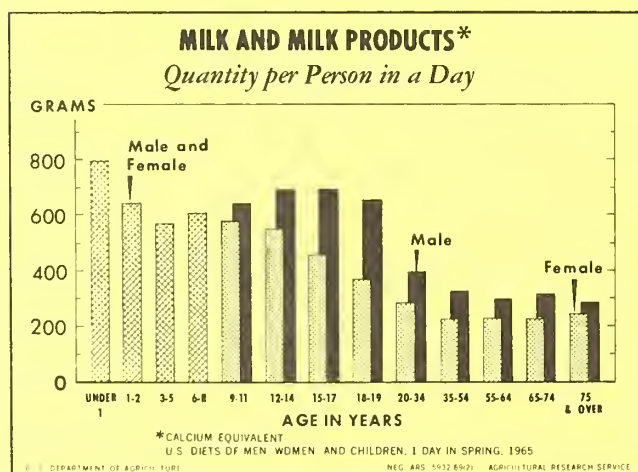


Figure 1

fluid milk, with milk products equated to fluid milk on the basis of their calcium equivalent. It should be noted that although butter is a dairy product, it is not classified with this group but included with fats and oils.

The highest level of consumption was by children under 1 year, and the next highest by boys of ages 9 through 19. Boys and men used more milk products than girls and women in all age groups 9 years and above.

Among females, consumption declined from 12 years on. It was lowest in the age group, 35-54, when the average milk or the calcium equivalent of milk products used was not quite 1 cup per day.

Among males, a sharp decrease in consumption, equivalent to about 1 cup of milk, occurred between ages 18-19 and 20-34 years when the competition of coffee and other beverages was strongest.

Meat, poultry, fish

For both males and females, consumption of meat, poultry, and fish increased until peak consumption was reached in the 20 to 34 year group. Thereafter, consumption declined. Quantities eaten by males were considerably higher than those by females. Use of foods in this group—a leading source of protein in most diets—was generally high. Except for the very youngest children, over 85 percent reported using one or more foods from this group on the day of the survey.

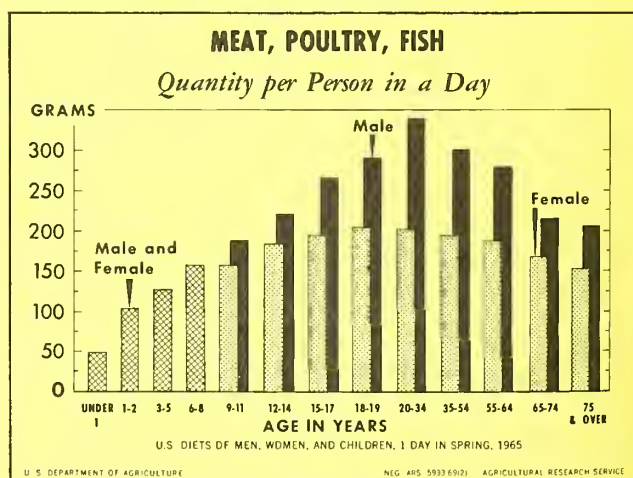


Figure 2

Grain products

Grain products were included in the diets of practically everyone. Bread products, including rolls and biscuits, were eaten in larger quantities and by more persons than other items in this group. Boys and men used larger quantities of grain products than girls and women in all age groups, 9 years and above. Peak consumption was by boys of ages 15 through 19 who consumed, on the average, grain prod-

ucts weighing the equivalent of six slices of bread plus 7 ounces of other grain products. In the chart, these weights are reported as flour equivalents—the weight of flours, meals, and cereals added to the weight of the proportionate amount of flour, meal, other cereal products in baked goods and prepared mixtures, chiefly grain.

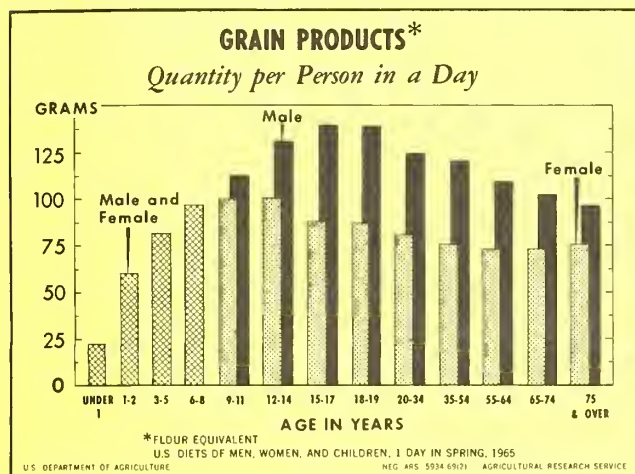


Figure 3

Vegetables and fruit

Citrus fruits are recognized as good sources of ascorbic acid; tomatoes, as a fair source. Consumption ranged from 19 percent by infants under 1 year to 50 percent by men and women in the 20-34 year group. Women of ages 55 through 74 years ate more tomatoes and citrus fruits than men in the same age span—an exception to the observation that men generally are more of all food groups than did women.

Dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables include vegetables high in vitamin A value, such as broccoli, spinach, carrots and sweet potatoes. Use was relatively low—only 10 to 20 percent of all persons in the various age groups

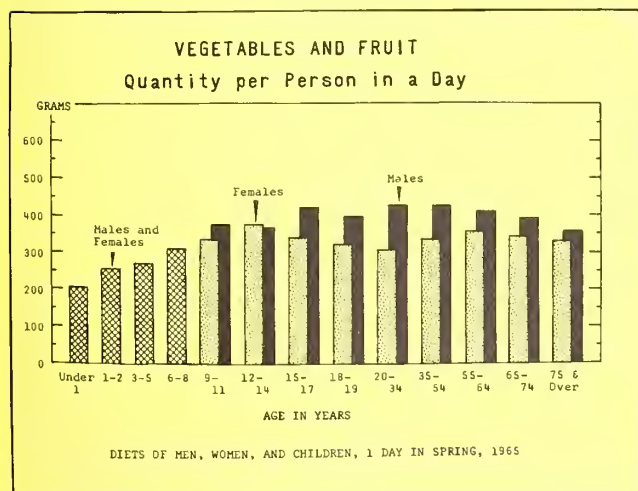


Figure 4

ate any of these vegetables in a day. Since average quantities are based on all persons in a group, these amounts are relatively low. The highest users, males ages 65 through 74, ate an average of 23 grams, the equivalent of 2½ tablespoons of cooked carrots or 2 tablespoons of spinach.

In most of the sex-age groups, half or more of the persons used potatoes on the day of the survey. In general, average quantities used increased up to 20-34 years for both males and females, and then decreased. Males used larger quantities than females—almost twice as much at the peak consumption.

Other vegetables and fruit, those not already mentioned, accounted for over half of the total vegetables and fruit for most sex-age groups. The largest use was by males at 35-54 years. Between 75 and 85 percent of most groups reported using one or more foods from this group on the day of the survey.

Beverages other than milk and juices

These beverages include coffee, tea, soft drinks, and alcoholic beverages. Consumption increased with age, and the highest was by men and women in ages 35 through 54. A large increase in coffee consumption occurred between the 18-19 and 20-34 year age groups.

Soft drinks constituted a large proportion of these beverages used by children and adolescents. About one-third of the children and one-half of the adolescents reported using soft drinks in a single day.

Generally, the average quantities of milk and milk products consumed by persons in different age groups varied inversely with the average quantities of other beverages used.

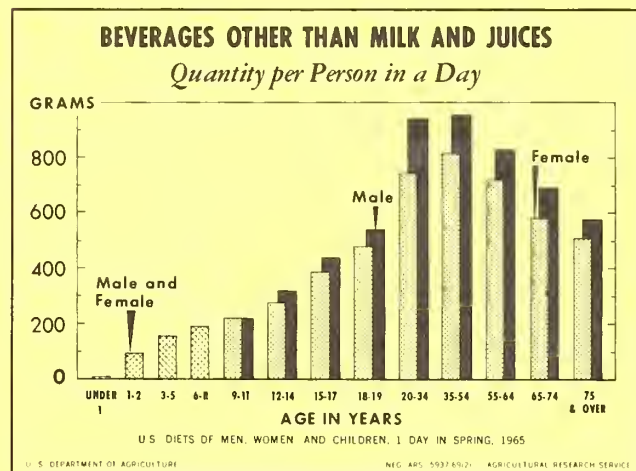


Figure 5

NUTRITIVE VALUE OF DIETS

The average nutritive content of the food and beverages consumed by the different sex and age groups was com-

pared with the 1968 Recommended Dietary Allowances, Food and Nutrition Board, National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, adapted to match the 22 sex-age groupings used in the study. Primary emphasis was given to comparisons of the average diets of different sex-age groups.

For most of the sex-age groups, average diets approached (90 to 100 percent) or were above the recommended allowances for calories and five of the seven nutrients studied—protein, vitamin A value, thiamine, riboflavin, and ascorbic acid (fig. 6). As can be seen from the chart, calcium and iron were the nutrients which were below dietary allowances for more of the sex-age groups than any other nutrient—as much as 30 percent or more in some groups.

The average number of calories was about the same as the recommendations in the diets of males, and about 10 percent below in the diets of females.

The contribution of fat to the total calories in the diet averaged about 45 percent for men 20-64 years—considered by many to be too high a proportion. The Food and Nutrition Board does not include an allowance for fat in the Recommended Dietary Allowances nor a recommendation on the percentage of calories that should come from fat.

For all age groups included in the study, average intakes of protein were over 100 percent of the recommended allowances, with a range of about 110 to 250 percent.

Average intakes of vitamin A value, thiamine, and riboflavin in the diets of several groups of females were 5 to 15 percent below recommended amounts. In the diets of most age groups of males, however, amounts of thiamine were 5 to 15 percent above recommended allowances; of riboflavin, 15 to 70 percent above; and of vitamin A value, from 10 to 75 percent above. Only one group, men 75 years and over, had diets that did not meet the allowances for ascorbic acid.

NUTRIENTS LESS THAN THE RECOMMENDED DIETARY ALLOWANCES [▲]

SEX—AGE (YEARS)	PROTEIN	CALCIUM	IRON	VITAMIN A VALUE	THIAMINE	RIBO- FLAVIN	ASCORBIC ACID
MALE AND FEMALE:							
UNDER 1			* * * *				
1-2			* * * *				
3-5			* *				
6-8							
MALE:							
9-11		*					
12-14		* *	* * *		*		
15-17		*	* *				
18-19							
20-34							
35-54		*					
55-64		* *					
65-74		* *					
75 & OVER		* * *		*		* *	*
FEMALE:							
9-11		* * *	* * * *		* *		
12-14		* * * *	* * * *	*	* *		
15-17		* * * *	* * * *		* *		
18-19		* * * *	* * * *	*	* *		
20-34		* * * *	* * * *		* *		
35-54		* * * *	* * * *		* *		
55-64		* * * *	* * * *		* *		
65-74		* * * *	* * *	*	* *		
75 & OVER		* * * *	*	* *	* *	* * *	

* -1 THROUGH 10%

** -11 THROUGH 20%

*** -21 THROUGH 29%

**** -30% OR MORE

[▲]NAS-NRC. 1968

U.S. DIETS OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN, 1 DAY IN SPRING, 1965

Figure 6

Almost all groups of females and several groups of males reported diets that provided less food energy than in the National Research Council's table of recommended allowances.

Data for calcium and iron in the diets are shown in figures 7 and 8. As will be noted, many of the age groups had diets furnishing less than recommended allowances of these 2 nutrients, with several groups as much as 30 percent below recommendations. The average diets of girls (15-17 years) and of women (35 years and over) were about 35 percent below recommended allowances for calcium. The average diets of girls and women, 9 through 54 years, were about 40 percent below the amounts suggested for iron. Diets of children under 3 furnished about half the recommended allowances for iron, while average amounts of calcium were above recommendations.

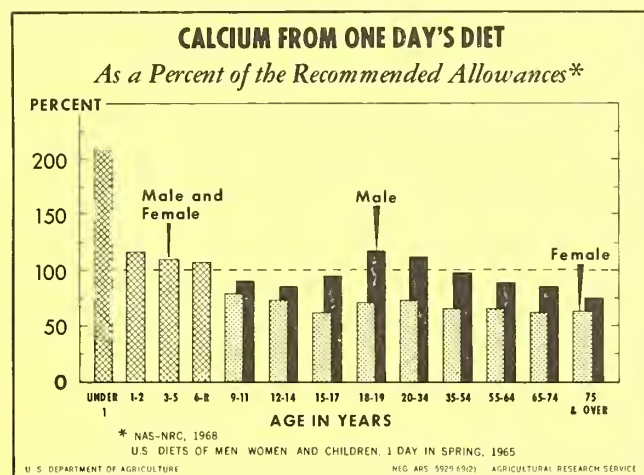


Figure 7

However, as the Food and Nutrition Board indicates, the recommended allowances for iron are not expected to be met through ordinary food products by all sex-age groups.¹ About 6 mg. of iron per 1,000 calories of food is all that might come from a normal U.S. diet without additional fortification of foods beyond the present levels in bread, flour, and many cereals. On the basis of currently available foods, and considering calorie recommendations, the normal diets of children under 3 years, of boys 12-14 years, and of females under 55, cannot be expected to achieve the 1968 Recommended Dietary Allowances for iron.

Groups with diets in need of improvement

One objective of this study was to identify those sex-age groups with diets most in need of improvement.

¹ National Academy of Sciences—National Research Council, Food and Nutrition Board. Recommended Dietary Allowances. National Academy Sciences Publication. 1964. 7th Edition Revised, 1968.

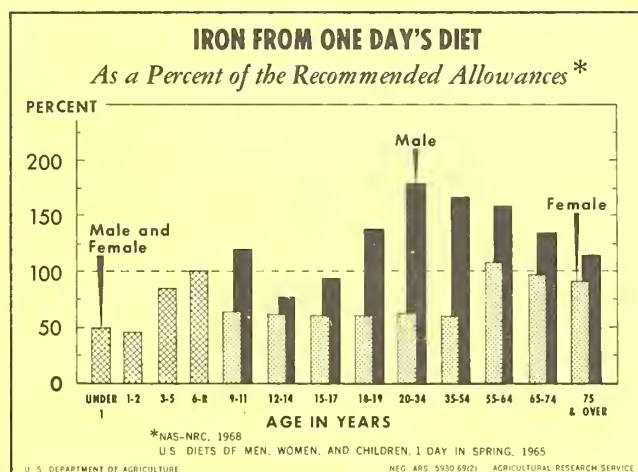


Figure 8

The groups with average diets below recommendations for more than one mineral or vitamin were all age groups of females 9 years and over, boys 12-17, and older men 75 and over. It is apparent that many persons within those groups had diets in need of improvement, especially where averages fell to more than 30 percent below recommendations, as for calcium and iron.

The following groups need dietary improvement to meet recommended allowances.

- *Adolescent girls and women, ages 9 through 64.*—Calcium was under the recommended allowances for all females in this age range by at least 20 percent, and for some, over 30 percent. Levels of iron in the diets were 30 percent or more below recommended amounts except for women 55-64. All these groups also had diets slightly below recommended allowances for thiamine.

- *Older men and women.*—Women, 65 years and over, had diets 30 percent or more below recommended allowances for calcium, and also under the allowances for thiamine, riboflavin, iron, and vitamin A value. Men of the upper age group, 75 years and over, had diets that averaged 24 percent below allowances for calcium, and also somewhat under allowances for riboflavin, vitamin A value, and ascorbic acid.

- *Infants and children under 3 years.*—Iron in the diets of infants and children in this age group averaged about 50 percent under the recommended allowance. Other nutrients, however, were found to be above the recommendations. The average intake of calories by infants up to 3 months of age was 50 percent above the Recommended Dietary Allowances; averages for the two groups of infants 3 through 5 months and 6 through 11 months were 15 to 20 percent above recommendations. Average protein, calcium, vitamin A value, and riboflavin intakes from food were about 2 to 3 times the recommendations for each of the three age groups under one year.

Use of vitamin or mineral supplements

Information was also obtained in the study on whether vitamin or mineral supplements were used during the 24-hour period covered. Reported use by persons over 3 years of age ranged from about 12 percent for girls 15-17 years and boys and men 15-34 years to about 34 percent for men and women 75 years and over. Over half (55 percent) of the infants under 1 year and 43 percent of the young children 1 through 2 years received vitamin or mineral supplements.

The nutritive content of these supplements and the quantity used were not obtained and thus were not taken into account in the calculation of the nutritive value of the diets.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SURVEY FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION

The 1965 survey of the diets of men, women, and children in the United States supplements earlier reports of the diets of households in emphasizing the need for nutritionists to—

1. Intensify nutrition education programs. Individuals in many American families at all income levels need guidance in meeting their nutritional needs from the great abundance of foods available. Emphasize wise choice of foods for family meals at home and for meals and snacks eaten away from home. Use mass media and other means to reach everyone.
2. Develop nutrition programs adapted to the needs of different age groups, and of different income groups. Develop goals and stress wise selection of foods within the framework of food habits and preferences of the various age groups. This study and other dietary surveys have shown that higher incomes and increased buying power do not necessarily result in better diets. Emphasize wise selection of foods at different expenditure levels.
3. Emphasize increased consumption of milk and milk products and other foods that are good sources of nutrients most often found below the recommended allowances. Point up the importance of using enriched and fortified forms of grain products. Stress the importance of foods rich in iron, particularly for young children and for girls and women.

Nutrients that were most often found to be below the recommended allowances, and foods that are good sources of nutrients include:

1. Calcium—milk and milk products (other than butter), flour and cereal products with added calcium, dark-green leafy vegetables.
2. Iron—lean red meats, organ meats, dark-green vege-

tables, dry beans and peas, whole grain and enriched grain products.

3. Thiamine—lean pork, dry beans and peas, and whole grain and enriched grain products.
4. Riboflavin—milk and milk products (other than butter), meat, especially organ meats, dark-green and leafy vegetables.
5. Vitamin A—dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables, whole milk and cream, butter and fortified margarine, egg yolk, liver, and some deep-yellow or orange-fleshed fruits, such as apricots and cantaloups.

The source of the data in this issue of NPN is: ARS 62-18, "Food Intake and Nutritive Value of Diets of Men, Women, and Children in the United States, Spring 1965."

This preliminary report presents tables and findings on the average nutritive content of food eaten in one day by the men, women, and children included in the survey; average quantities and percentage of persons eating specified foods and food groups; contribution of the 12 food groups to the food energy and nutrients in the diet; and percentage of persons using vitamin and mineral supplements. Data are shown for the United States by income levels and for the North and South separately, all incomes combined.

Single copies of ARS 62-18 are available from Consumer and Food Economics Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Federal Center Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Later reports will present information on family members' food intake and the nutrient content of their diets for 1 day, by income level and by two urbanizations (urban and rural) in the United States and by two regions (North and South), spring 1965. In addition to data shown in the preliminary report, information on food from home food supplies and food away from home will be included, as well as information on food from all sources. Contents will include information on frequency of eating and time of day food was eaten for food at home and food away, and by day of week. Data will be shown by income and for two urbanizations (urban and rural).

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